

STEP 2: *Categorize*

Now that you have removed all items from the space, it's time to start making sense of what's in front of you by placing the items into categories. Categorizing (or sorting) is simply grouping like items together. These categories can even have subcategories. For example, let's say you're organizing a room that has a lot of books. You may choose to group the books by genre, author, color, etc. Do what's best for you and what will help you later locate the exact book you're looking for. The same goes for other types of items (clothes, toys, art or office supplies, and so on).

WHY?

1. Grouping like items helps you take inventory of what you have and how much of that item you have. This will be helpful in the next step!
2. Categorizing creates a system that will later save you lots of time and frustration when looking for and putting back items.

Think about walking into a store. There's sections, categories, and signs for each type of product and these categories help to make your experience as a consumer easier. You likely won't spend much time in a store or purchase anything if it's cluttered or you're confused about where to find something. The same idea applies to your home. If you can't easily identify and locate what you're looking for, chances are you might not take the time to flip your home upside down to find that item, especially if you're in a rush to get out the door. The system that you are creating is meant to make your experience in your home as pleasant as possible, so keep that in mind when categorizing.

TIP:

It's ok to have a miscellaneous pile. Most people do! However, make sure you're categorizing those miscellaneous items by location. Try not to mix too many different random items just because they don't have a group to go into. Do your best to edit the miscellaneous pile based on where items would be used. You might find that as you begin organizing other areas of the home, you'll be able to add to those categories or create a new ones.

ACTION:

Think about the system you're creating. Similar to the example of going into a store, imagine yourself or another person in your home looking for a particular item, using it, and then putting it back. Ask yourself, "Do my categories make sense for me? Do they make sense for the other members of my family? Should this be in another category or location? From there, make adjustments as needed.